

# East Boston Preservation Priorities Report

December 2011

BOSTON  
PRESERVATION  
ALLIANCE

In partnership with Historic Boston Incorporated and  
The National Trust for Historic Preservation

# East Boston: Places Worth Preserving, Stories Worth Telling

## A Historic Preservation Priorities Report by the Boston Preservation Alliance

December 2011

### Table of Contents

1.0 About Us	1
2.0 Historic Preservation Opportunities in East Boston: An Introduction	3
2.1 Historic Preservation Opportunities: Religious Properties	3
2.1a Religious Properties: Priority	4
2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note	7
2.2 Historic Preservation Opportunities: Libraries	13
2.2a Libraries: Priority	13
2.2b Libraries: Additional Properties of Note	14
2.3 Historic Preservation Opportunities: Unique East Boston Places and Features	15
2.3a Unique East Boston Places and Features: Priority	15
2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note	19
3.0 Next Steps for Neighborhood Historic Preservation: Additional Notes on Community Views, Interests, and Actions	38
4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston	39
5.0 References	50

# 1.0 About Us

This report was prepared by the Boston Preservation Alliance from September 2010 through early March 2011. It grows out of a process led by the Neighborhood Preservation Partnership, a collaboration between two local historic preservation organizations, the Boston Preservation Alliance and Historic Boston Incorporated, in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and neighborhood organizations including East Boston Main Streets.

## Who We Are

- The Boston Preservation Alliance (the Alliance) is the primary non-profit historic preservation advocacy and education organization serving the city of Boston.
- Historic Boston Incorporated (HBI) is a revolving loan fund and non-profit real estate organization that rehabilitates historic and culturally significant properties in Boston.
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) is a national membership non-profit organization dedicated to saving historic places and revitalizing communities. The NTHP Partners in the Field Program supports outreach into traditionally underserved communities throughout the U.S. — in our case, Boston's neighborhoods, in order to help save "places that matter."
- East Boston Main Streets (EBMS) is part of the national Main Streets program, which is an outgrowth of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. EBMS revitalizes East Boston's commercial districts by investing in their historic buildings.

Through series of neighborhood-based workshops, the Boston Preservation Alliance strives to identify neighborhood priorities for future historic preservation advocacy and education. The priorities discussed in this report reflect what we heard from people who live and work in East Boston during a series of workshops and one-on-one communications during the fall of 2010. This report will be circulated to key agencies and organizations in Boston and the Commonwealth

of Massachusetts, including the Boston Landmarks Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development, and will inform the Alliance's priorities regarding potential advocacy in East Boston in the years ahead.

In conjunction with this report, HBI has authored a Commercial Casebook chapter for the East Boston Main Streets district, which identifies priorities for its future real estate development and preservation of its historic commercial properties. The East Boston Commercial Casebook chapter (attached as an Appendix to this report) will be part of a Casebook for Main Streets districts throughout the city, which will be distributed to key agencies and organizations in Boston and the Commonwealth. The East Boston chapter will inform HBI's priorities regarding potential real estate development assistance in East Boston in the future.

This report represents the final product of a five-month information gathering process in East Boston, which included the following components:

- Informal information gathering from one-on-one communications with a broad spectrum of neighborhood residents and community members;
- Primary and secondary source historical research, with sources including Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Forms, existing neighborhood reports and surveys, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission's online MACRIS (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System) research tool;

- A Historic Preservation Walking Tour of Maverick and Central Squares (with some overlap into the Jeffries Point and Eagle Hill neighborhoods), for East Boston residents and other interested individuals, co-presented by the Alliance and EBMS in September 2010;
- Interactive presentations in November–December 2010 at Orient Heights, Eagle Hill, and Jeffries Point neighborhood association meetings;
- HBI’s preparation of a Casebook chapter on East Boston’s Main Streets, including Maverick and Central Squares;
- A culminating workshop on December 8th, 2010, called “Places Worth Preserving, Stories Worth Telling,” at which community leaders and residents gathered to learn about the information gathered to date and to provide additional information toward the final report.

East Boston community members have expressed the following hopes or visions for East Boston historic preservation efforts:

- Increased awareness among East Boston residents of the historical “gems” that exist throughout East Boston; increased pride among residents of all ages in East Boston’s rich heritage;
- Improvement in perceptions of East Boston among other Boston residents;

- Creation of a “galvanizing force for preservation and community betterment” in the East Boston community; development of a leadership group to ensure ongoing historic preservation in the neighborhood; and
- Restoration or rehabilitation of historic properties in the neighborhood that need additional attention, financial investment or technical assistance.

The neighborhood priorities discussed in this report represent many voices from the East Boston community; the information about each entry is drawn from a combination of the following: neighborhood residents’ memories and knowledge, written records and reports; discussions with representatives of neighborhood and city organizations and agencies. The properties and places mentioned in this report — the “stories worth telling,” include both existing ones and places that no longer stand. In East Boston as in any neighborhood, there are lessons to be learned from these past places, some of which were lost to neglect and/or demolition. These lessons can build a foundation for responsible preservation efforts in the future.

While the priorities identified in this report do not necessarily reflect the priorities of the Boston Preservation Alliance, the Alliance will use this report to help focus our educational and advocacy efforts in East Boston in the near future.

## 2.0 Historic Preservation Opportunities in East Boston: an Introduction

The following sections represent themes that arose during this project's information gathering phase. Each section includes a brief introduction, followed by a short list of identified priorities, and then a more comprehensive listing of properties or issues mentioned by community members that relate to the theme.

*Properties mentioned below that also appear in Historic Boston Incorporated's Commercial Casebook Chapter for East Boston are marked\* with an asterisk.*

### 2.1 Historic Preservation Opportunities: Religious Properties

The history of East Boston's places of worship highlights the neighborhood's immigration and cultural history. During the preparation of this report neighborhood residents shared their pride in the neighborhood's beautiful historical churches, voiced concern about religious properties in need of repairs or ongoing stewardship, and expressed a desire to recognize former Jewish synagogues and the first Jewish cemetery in Massachusetts. They also raised the topic of diverse expressions of religious community in contemporary East Boston life.



## 2.1a Religious Properties: Priority



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### First Presbyterian Church\*

130 London Street  
(1870)

This High-Victorian Gothic church was constructed in 1870-1871. The First Presbyterian Church first gathered in 1853 in East Boston, erecting a wooden church in 1860, which burned down in 1870. The current building is the sole survivor of the numerous High Victorian Gothic style churches that once clustered in the Central/Maverick Square area.

A new congregation has taken over the building in recent years. During the summer of 2010, emergency repairs were completed to the stained glass windows facing London/Meridian Streets. The building likely needs significant structural repairs.

## 2.1a Religious Properties: Priority

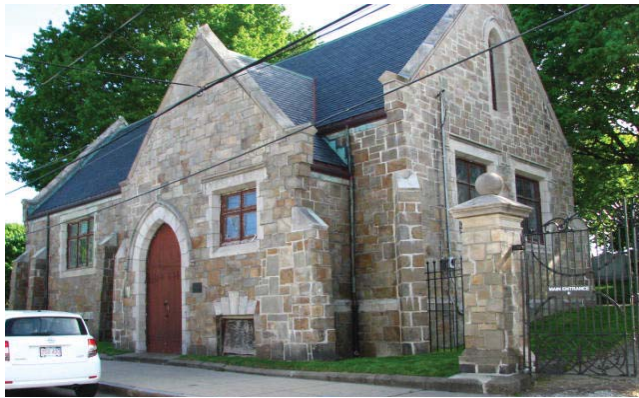


PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER BARRINGTON



PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER BARRINGTON

### Temple Ohabei Shalom Cemetery and Chapel

147 Wordsworth Street  
(1842–1903)

Congregation Ohabei Shalom (the name means Lovers of Peace) was founded in 1842-1843. It was the first Jewish congregation in Massachusetts and the second in New England (after Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island).

The Wordsworth Street cemetery was founded in 1844, after Congregation Ohabei Shalom purchased the land from the City of Boston for this purpose for \$200, and became the Commonwealth's first legally established Jewish cemetery.

The Victorian Gothic style chapel at the cemetery's entrance, designed by architect John A. Hasty, was built in 1903. The Mystic River Jewish Communities Project plans to develop the chapel into a museum that will house a permanent exhibit on East Boston immigration history and the Jewish communities that were established along the Mystic River.

A 2008 National Register listing and Historic Preservation Restriction applies to the cemetery as a whole and the chapel building. The Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts (JCAM) currently owns and manages the Ohabei Shalom Cemetery. The JCAM has received two matching Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grants from Massachusetts Historical Commission for exterior repair and restoration work.

Some residents have expressed concern about the wall of Temple Ohabei Shalom Cemetery, which they report appears to be crumbling. A representative of the Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts has confirmed that the wall at the back of the cemetery (Byron Street) is structurally sound.

## 2.1a Religious Properties: Priority



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Ohel Jacob Hall

Corner of Paris and Gove Streets  
(1907)

### And Sites of Other Former Jewish Synagogues

Othel Jacob Hall, a small brick synagogue, was demolished ca. 1970, soon after the congregation gave the property to the East Boston Health Center. According to one community member, bricks from the former synagogue were used to construct a still-standing private residence outside Boston.

According to David Kaufman's essay, "Temples in the American Athens," in Sarna et al 2005 (p. 191), Congregation Ohel Jacob, established in 1893, was the first Jewish congregation in East Boston; the congregation built its first synagogue building, Ohel Jacob Hall, in 1907. (See Mark Raider's essay in the same collection for more information about the synagogue, p. 251.) The Jewish population of East Boston numbered approximately 5,000 in 1910,

around the time the first East Boston synagogue was built, according to Gerald Gamm in an essay published in Sarna et al (p. 147).

Residents hope that something will be done to recognize the historic sites of this and other former synagogues in the neighborhood.

Pictured above is the current Health Center parking lot, where Othel Jacob Hall formerly stood.



## 2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note

In the Maverick and Central Square commercial district, three churches received attention: the First Presbyterian Church (on London Street between Maverick and Central squares), Our Saviours Lutheran Church on Paris Street (in Maverick Square), and Most Holy Redeemer Church on Maverick Street. Of these three, Most Holy Redeemer Church is featured in the “Success Stories” section of this report (below), and the First Presbyterian Church has been identified as a high priority for attention and care (See “Priorities” section above).

In greater East Boston, the following churches, associated buildings and shrines received attention in the Fall 2010 neighborhood workshops.

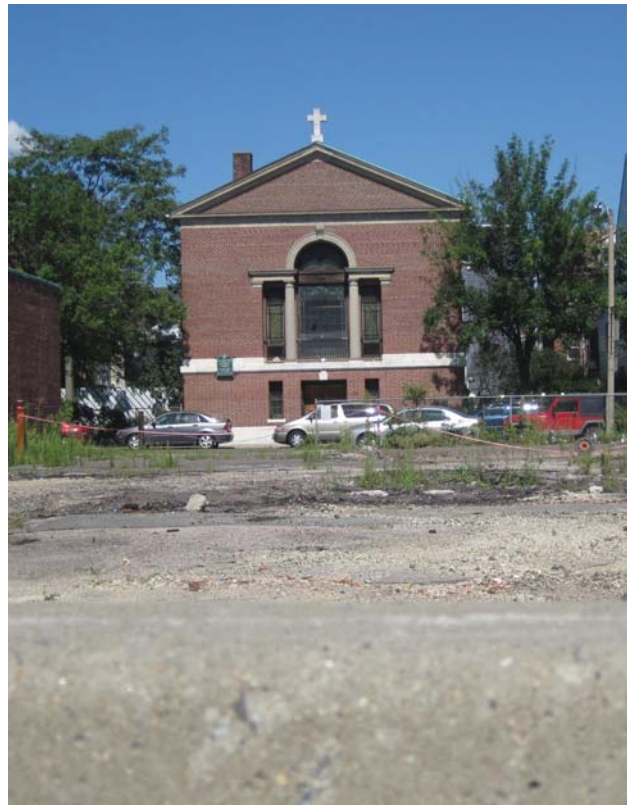


PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Our Saviours Lutheran Church

28 Paris Street  
(1917)

Located on Paris Street behind the construction site for the new Neighborhood Health Center, this Lutheran church was originally named Our Savior American Lutheran Church. The Colonial Revival style church was designed by architect Hans C. Hanson, features stained glass windows, and is considered a significant historical building in Maverick Square.

## 2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### St. Mary Star of the Sea Church

55 Moore Street  
(1910)

Built in 1910 by prominent church architect Franz Joseph Untersee, this building tells the story of Irish immigrants' upward mobility in East Boston. Population growth in East Boston's Harbor View section spurred the need for a second Roman Catholic church.

Some residents have expressed an interest in learning more about the building's current ownership and condition.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LARRY BORINS

### St. Mary Star of the Sea School

58 Moore Street  
(1887)

This Panel Brick style school, also known as the Saint Francis Xavier Roman Catholic School, closed in 2008, leaving the building vacant. Excel Academy, a Boston Public Charter School, will be acquiring and renovating the building in 2011, with anticipated occupation in 2012. Excel Academy will demolish a 1960 replacement convent building, which was determined by the Boston Landmarks Commission not to be a significant building pursuant to the Article 85 (Demolition Delay process). A small contemporary addition to the building will house a new entryway and assembly space and facilitate handicapped accessibility. Excel Academy will remove later-added elements from the exterior of the existing school building (e.g., boiler stack and covered entrance), thus restoring some of the school's original character.

## 2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Our Lady of The Assumption Roman Catholic Church

404 Sumner Street  
(1863)

Designed by architect Patrick C. Keeley (along with the Most Holy Redeemer Church; see “Success Stories,” below) this church in the Jeffries Point neighborhood was built in 1863. A proposal has been made to locate a cell phone antenna within the tower, which would generate a new source of revenue for the church. The top of the original tower was destroyed some years ago and some community members expressed a desire to see the remaining portion reconfigured in a historically sensitive way. An earlier plan for a cupola was rejected and the current plan is to raise the tower and add a cornice from the original 1863 design. The church is in pretty good shape according to residents, and the community would like to see the building continue to be well maintained.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### St. Lazarus Roman Catholic Church

61 Ashley Street  
(1922)

This Italianesque Craftsman style church building (designed by Henry N. Cooper and Company) is located in Orient Heights, near the base of the stairs that lead to the Madonna Shrine (See next entry, below). Now the St. Joseph and Lazarus Church, this church served an Italian immigrant community in its early days.

The original church complex included a rectory, 59 Ashley Street (1925), visible at right in photograph; school, 67 Ashley Street (1927); and convent, 87 Ashley Street (1938).

## 2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note

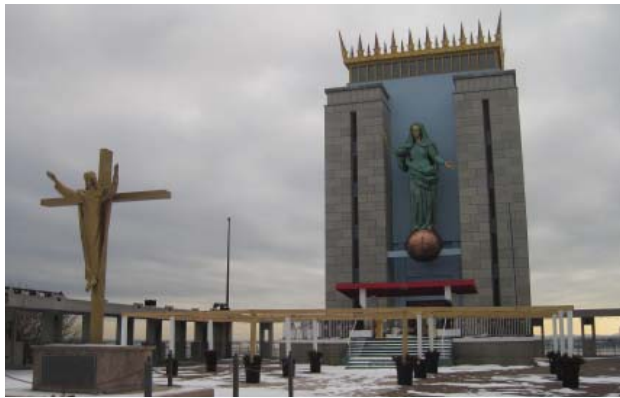


PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Madonna, Queen of the Universe Statue Madonna Queen Shrine Chapel

111 Orient Avenue  
(1954-1956)

Well known in the East Boston community, this local attraction boasts an enormous statue, commonly known as the “Queen Madonna National Shrine,” a chapel (designed by Mario Bacciocchi) with distinctive stained-glass windows depicting Biblical scenes, and panoramic views. The Madonna Shrine, a full-size replica of the shrine at the Don Orione Center in Rome’s Montemario district of Rome, Italy, was constructed by Jewish-Italian sculptor Arrigo Minerbi (with architect Mario Bacciocchi), to express Minerbi’s gratitude to the Catholic Church for having shielded his family from the Nazis during World War II.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Don Orione Nursing Home

111 Orient Avenue  
(1956)

One of few notable mid-century Modern structures in East Boston, Don Orione Nursing Home across from the shrine (shown at left) is historically and architecturally significant. The International Style building was designed by Colletti Brothers and executed in hammertone, red brick and reinforced concrete.

Orient Heights residents note that the “88 stairs” leading to the shrine (between Leyden and Gladstone streets) are in need of repair/restoration.



## 2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church

120 Gove Street  
(1907)

The Archdiocese of Boston officially closed this Craftsman style, Italian immigrant-built church in 2004; since then, laypersons have kept it open with a weekly service. (Community members note that this church may be the site of the world's oldest vigil.)

The Mt. Carmel complex included a school (1931, Moderne style) and convent (1949, Postwar Traditional style) at 48-49 Frankfort Street. The school building was developed into condos in 1970; the convent building still stands and is currently vacant.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Grace Federated Church

760 Saratoga Street  
(1903)

Originally named Baker Congregational Church, this building was designed by architects John Nelson Thisland and F.W. Wolcott in Colonial Revival and Shingle styles. The church was designated a National Register Individual Property in 1998, and received a Preservation Restriction in 1999. The 1999 preservation restriction was conveyed as part of a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, which funded part of the exterior restoration work undertaken at that time. Residents consider this church to be in good condition.

## 2.1b Religious Properties: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### All Soul's Universalist Church

70 White Street  
(1890)

Commonly known as White Street Baptist Church, this Queen Anne style church building in the Eagle Hill National Register District was designed by Central Glass Works; Joseph Eastman; Sidney Peterson and Company; J. Henry Stevenson. One longtime resident recalls that this church formerly featured a wooden gazebo in its tower, which was disassembled in the 1970s because of safety concerns and could potentially be rebuilt.

## 2.2a Libraries: Priority

### 2.2 Historic Preservation Opportunities: Libraries

This section includes two properties, both of which have been identified as preservation priorities in the neighborhood, and the brief mention of a former branch library in the Jeffries Point neighborhood.



#### East Boston Branch Library\*

276 Meridian Street  
(1914)

The East Boston branch of the Boston Public Library system is reportedly the first free branch library in the U.S. The East Boston library first opened in 1870 in another building, and soon outgrew the space. The East Boston Branch Library was built in 1914 in the Classical Revival style by John F Griffin and Company (builders) and James E. McLaughlin (architect).

An alternate site was selected for a new East Boston Branch library in September 2010, and this century-old, significant community building's future remains unknown.

## 2.2a Libraries: Priority



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Orient Heights Branch Library

18 Barnes Ave  
(1912)

The future of this building is unknown at present, pending planned construction of the new East Boston Branch Library.

Fran Rowan, longtime resident and neighborhood historic preservation activist, has suggested that this branch library building become the home of the East Boston Historical and Preservation Society.

## 2.2b Libraries: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Webster Street Branch Library

222 Webster Street  
(1830)

During the workshop series, residents mentioned a former East Boston branch library location, 222 Webster Street in the Jeffries Point section of the neighborhood. According to a current library employee and longtime resident, this branch closed during the 1950s, and formerly housed the paintings that now adorn the walls of the Meridian Street branch library. The 1830 brick and stone building still stands, and has been converted into a two-family dwelling.



## 2.3 Historic Preservation Opportunities: Unique East Boston Places and Features

In the course of the 2010 Neighborhood Workshops in East Boston, community members mentioned a wide variety of historical buildings, as well as other elements of the neighborhood's transportation and immigration histories, archaeological sites including prehistoric Native American settlements, maritime industries, Revolutionary War history, pumps and pumping stations, and an assortment of commercial district features – from a candy factory to a historical sidewalk clock. Attention to specific buildings, sections of the neighborhood, and parkland lost to airport expansion is a critical theme, both defining some of the content matter in this section of the report and remaining a galvanizing force for neighborhood historic preservation interest and activism.

In this section, we have made our best effort to include a broad assortment of buildings and other features that contribute to the character of East Boston and speak to the preservation interests of its residents. As in the sections above, at the beginning of this section we call out several properties and features that community members have indicated are historic preservation priorities for the near future.

The priorities listed here range from larger themes in the neighborhood to small, discrete projects, and include maintenance/restoration as well as further research and historical interpretation.

## 2.3a Unique East Boston Places and Features: Priority

### Remnants and Markers of Revolutionary War Battles

Additional research may provide more accurate information regarding Revolutionary War activity on the islands that now comprise East Boston; the military activity in this area may have represented the first use of artillery in the Boston area. In any event, many residents would like to see more attention brought to this aspect of East Boston history – at the levels of research and public interpretation.

According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, archaeologist Victor T. Mastone, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources, has recently received funding to study the harbor area for traces of Revolutionary War history. Archaeology, primary sources, and historic preservation efforts in research and interpretation may work together to help the community achieve their objectives in this area.

### Historical Pumps and Pumping Stations

These emerged as a priority among neighborhood residents during this workshop series. These properties include the following:

## 2.3a Unique East Boston Places and Features: Priority



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH KELLY

### Pumphouse ("Bath House")

American Legion Park  
(ca. early 1900s)

Some residents are concerned about potential demolition of this building, which is known by some as a bath house and originally functioned as a pump house. The building is also known as "field house," according to Eagle Hill residents, who report that about 500 residents signed a petition to oppose demolition several years ago. Many residents support redeveloping the field house so it could be used as a restroom facility for residents of all ages who use the surrounding space for athletics and recreation.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH KELLY

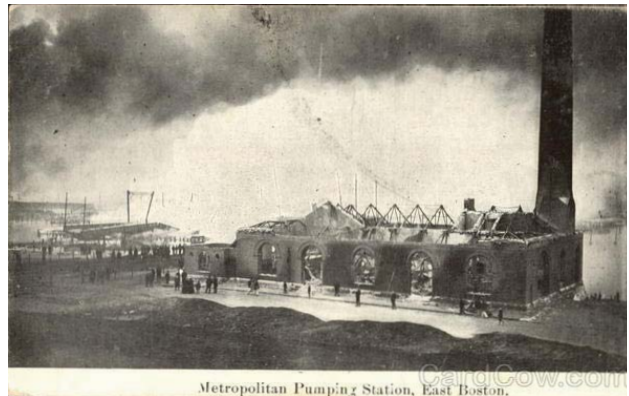


PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.GARDCOW.COM

### North Metropolitan Sewage Pumping Station

600 Chelsea Street  
(1911)

The original sewage pumping station at this site was built in the 1890s, and processed sewage from East Boston as well as neighboring cities and towns, including Woburn, Arlington, Chelsea, Revere, Cambridge, and Somerville. The pumping station that stands today was built after the original station was badly damaged in the Chelsea fire of 1908, and operated until 1989. (See *Seasholes* 2009 p. 53 for more information.)

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) surplused this property and turned it, along with 20 Addison Street (See below), over to DCAM in 2002. A new pumping facility has been constructed next to this historic facility, which the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) has recently put up for auction. The building is being marketed for light industry.

## 2.3a Unique East Boston Places and Features: Priority



### East Boston Steam Pump Station

20 Addison Street  
(1894)

At the turn of the 20th century, this station was one of three state-of-the-art pumping stations in the Metropolitan Sewerage System, and it was one of the original components of the original Metropolitan Sewerage District. The station was enlarged in 1910-1911. The brick building was embellished with corner quoins, a classically detailed cornice, and twin chimney stacks, as can be seen in Library of Congress historical images accessible online (See "East Boston Steam Pump Station" in References). An additional image is located between p. 40 and 41 of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board Annual Report (1911) (also cited in References).

This historic facility was owned by Massachusetts Water Resources Authority until 2002, when MWRA turned it over to the Division of Capital Asset Management. The photograph above shows a 2011 view of 20 Addison Street with a single smokestack visible in the left background.

No Image Available

### Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn Railroad Tunnel

(1875)

Completed in 1875 in conjunction with the establishment of the Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn Railroad Ferry, this 9-mile railway, including a 400-foot-long tunnel under Jeffries Point, allowed passengers to travel with relative ease between Lynn and East Boston, and then connect to the rest of Boston via ferry. A second, adjacent tunnel was added in 1894. The railroad and associated ferry line closed in 1940.

According to Nancy Seasholes (spoken communication, December 2010), the still-existing tunnel, which "was lined with brick arching and the portals...faced with granite," represents the most threatened historical resource along East Boston's waterfront.

An image of the tunnel can be found in Seasholes 2009, p. 7.

## 2.3a Unique East Boston Places and Features: Priority



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Wood Island Park

Neptune Road  
(1898)

This Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park, opened in 1898 and dismantled in the late 1960s to accommodate airport expansion, is remembered fondly by many longtime residents as an important element of family and community life in East Boston. The park included beaches, a bathhouse, picnic areas, tennis courts and ball fields. Olmsted designed Neptune Road, lined by elms, as the park's entryway.

The park was renamed World War Memorial Park after World War I. In 1945, legislation passed that permitted the state and city to exchange city-owned land needed by the airport for recreational areas slated to be constructed by the state in the future. This legislation paved the way for the 1954 exchange of the Amerena and World War Memorial parks for the current East Boston stadium and Constitution Beach (see "Constitution Beach," below). The legislature approved a runway extension into the park area in 1966, and construction began the following year. Massport extended the project into the Neptune Road area in 1969 (Seasholes 2003, p. 380-81; see also "Samuel Barkin House" entry, below).

Some residents are advocating for protection of the historic elms that remain at the former entrance to Wood Island Park.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### 9 Chelsea Street Clock

9 Chelsea Street  
(1905-1918)

This historic clock, prominently located in Maverick Square outside the Rapino Memorial Home, is one of five street clocks citywide that were designated as Boston Landmarks in 1983. Along with the other four street clocks designated, the 9 Chelsea Street Clock was manufactured by the E. Howard Clock Co. of Boston, and manufactured in Roxbury. It originally stood in Scollay Square, and was later moved to its current East Boston location.

The clock's base, post, head and crown are made of cast iron and painted black. Historically, street clocks served as timekeepers in commercial districts prior to the availability of inexpensive pocket watches, and also advertised the businesses before which they stood. Howard Co. clocks have become rare because of vandalism, lack of maintenance, and damage caused by automobile accidents. (For additional information on the history of street clocks in Boston, see the Boston Landmarks Commission's "Five Street Clocks" study report, listed in References below.)

The 9 Chelsea Street Clock's face fell off during winter 2010; its owner has begun investigating possible sources of technical and funding assistance to repair it. East Boston Main Streets has pledged commitment to supporting the clock's repair.



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



### Woodbury Building

191-201 Sumner Street  
(1844)

The Woodbury Building, a three-story, brick, Greek Revival commercial block, is the oldest existing commercial building in East Boston.

Currently, the building has no interpretation and has lost some of its historical character because of modifications to the exterior.



### The Welfare Building

154 Maverick Street  
(1936)

Built by the City of Boston in 1936, this building sits on the land that was once occupied by the Boston Armory in East Boston. The three-story brick building was constructed during the Great Depression to assist Bostonians financially.

The building, which has been vacant for many years, is slated to be redeveloped into a multi-use building that will include small business incubator space on the first floor, office space on the second floor, and a residential apartment on the top (third) floor.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHELBY GRAHAM LARSSON

### East Boston Post Office

50 Meridian Street  
(1850)

This building in the Maverick-Central Square commercial district was identified by residents as worthy of mention in this report. Inside the post office, four WPA-era murals feature East Boston scenes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHELBY GRAHAM LARSSON

### Donald McKay House

78-80 White Street  
(1844)

Donald McKay is a well-known ship builder in East Boston; attention to the range of existing buildings and sites that mark his and his brother's businesses and life in 19th-century East Boston could potentially bring attention to his life as well as the collection of shipyards, lumber wharfs, and other marine industries that Nancy Seasholes describes in her 2009 study, "Sites for Historical Interpretation on East Boston's Waterfronts." According to Seasholes, a currently standing monument to Donald McKay may be located in a location outside the expanse of McKay's shipyard. If research confirms this, Seasholes suggests that the monument be moved to a more historically appropriate location, perhaps with additional information about McKay (Seasholes 2009, p. 40). For more information on McKay's shipyard, see Seasholes 2009, p. 38-39.

The Greek Revival style Donald McKay House, pictured above, stands in a prominent hilltop location on White Street, across the street from East Boston High School. It is currently used as a two-family residence. The McKay House is a Boston Landmark and is also individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Bates House

1 Monmouth Square  
(1870)

This 1870 Italianate mansion, built for Governor John Lewis Bates (1859-1946) at the crest of Eagle Hill, was converted into a hospital (Strong Hospital) and operated as such until the 1960s. The building has recently served as a transitional housing facility. Bates House is located in the Eagle Hill National Register District.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Jeffries Yacht Club

565 Summer Street  
(est. 1879)

This historic yacht club is, in some people's opinion, in a state of disrepair. According to Nancy Seasholes, author of the 2009 report, "Sites for Historical Interpretation on East Boston's Waterfronts," the current building is not historically significant, but it does stand on the site of the original 1879 yacht club, which joined several other yacht clubs chartered in Boston during the 1860s-1870s. The Jeffries Point Rowing Association, comprised primarily of Irish workingmen, may also have used this site in the late 19th century.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



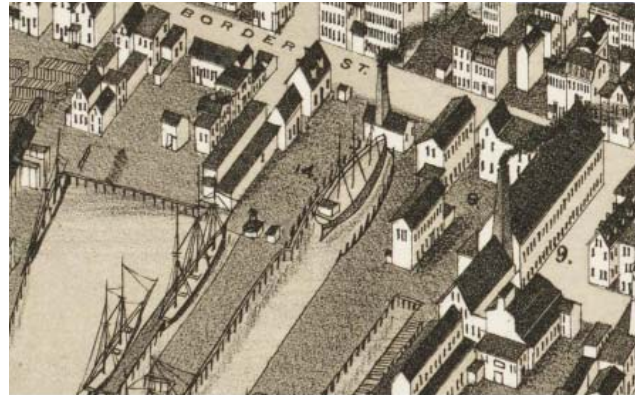
PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Warehouses along Marginal and Border Streets

There is a desire to see interpretative signage placed here in order to call attention to the rich history of these buildings, including those that have been demolished. (See also: "Atlantic Works and Wigglesworth Buildings" in "Successes" section below; and "Samuel Hall Shipyard," below.)

Additionally, Nancy Seasholes has called attention to the following, still-standing and significant buildings: McLaren's Shop and Sawmill, 141 Border Street, p. 28-29 in her 2009 report; Chase's Carpentry Shop, 161-163 Border Street, p. 29 in her report; and Briggs Paint factory, 266 Border Street, p. 35-36 in her report.

266 Border Street is pictured above.



MAP REPRODUCTION COURTESY OF THE NORMAN B. LEVENTHAL MAP CENTER AT THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Samuel Hall Shipyard East Boston Dry Dock Company/ Atlantic Works Railway Drydocks Area

This property has historic associations with shipbuilder Samuel Hall and has been recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, as part of a larger historic district that includes the Atlantic Works Boiler Shop, Machine Shop, and Office Building (See "Atlantic Works and Wigglesworth Machinery Company Buildings" in the "Successes" section below). This historic area is the location of the proposed Boston East condominium project (See next entry).

The above detail from an 1879 birds-eye view of East Boston shows East Boston Dry Dock Company facilities. (Bailey, O.H., View of East Boston, Mass. 1879 [Boston: O.H. Bailey & Co., 1879].) Thanks to Nancy Seasholes for identification in her 2009 report, p. 26.



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### “Boston East”

102-148 Border Street  
(Proposed condominium project across from 80 Liverpool Street)

Located across the street from American Architectural Iron Co., Boston East includes three parcels of land, all owned by the City of Boston. East Boston CDC is partnering with Trinity Financial to present a development model for the land; a Draft Environmental Impact Report has been submitted to the City and State. The design and program is currently under review and revision in light of the results of the East Boston Municipal Harbor planning exercise and the current economic climate for financing new development.

The remnants of docks, including ship cradles, and tracks of a marine railway can still be seen on this site. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has suggested that the significant historic and archaeological area to be impacted by the Boston East project requires further archaeological investigation and consultation about the results, in order to consider alternatives that would minimize or mitigate potential adverse effects on nearby historic resources.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, PRINT DEPARTMENT

### Grand Junction Grain Elevator Grand Junction Wharves

Marginal Street, Jeffries Point  
(ca. 1880)

Apparently owned by the Boston and Albany Railroad, this grain elevator at the Grand Junction wharves in Jeffries Point was destroyed by fire in 1908. (See *Seasholes*, p. 11, for a ca. 1882 illustration of the elevator with surrounding wharves.)

The 1925 image above, courtesy of the Boston Public Library Print Department, shows the replacement grain elevator (tall brick building at left), which stood on Marginal Street on the site of today's Piers Park until it was demolished in the 1970s.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note

No Image Available

### Simpson's Dry Dock Co.

Jeffries Point  
(constructed 1853-1874)

In 1853, James E. Simpson (1813-1897) purchased this site in Jeffries Point and constructed a wooden dry dock, adding a second dry dock in 1855 and a third in 1874. In 1854, Simpson received a patent for his timber dry docks, later building docks for the U.S. Navy and others. During both the Civil War and World War I his dry docks repaired damaged ships. In 1922, the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation (which later would acquire the Atlantic Works) purchased the Simpson Dry Dock Company. Bethlehem operated the yard during World War II and owned it until 1982. Massport acquired the yard in 1985.

For an image of Simpson's Dry Dock, see Sammarco p. 103 (reprinted in Seasholes 2009, p.7).



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD



WOODBLOCK PRINT COURTESY OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
PRINT DEPARTMENT

### Maverick House

20-30 Maverick Square  
(1835)

The site of the future Neighborhood Health Center in Maverick Square formerly housed a series of elegant hotels. The original 1835 Maverick House hotel, pictured in the wood engraving shown above (date unknown), burned and was replaced. After the second hotel was destroyed by fire, Sturtevant House was constructed in 1857-58. These hotels were significant landmarks in historical East Boston, serving railroad passengers and other visitors to the city. Sturtevant House was demolished in 1927.

Construction on the Neighborhood Health Center has commenced, and the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Brophy Memorial Park (formerly Belmont Square)

(1830s)

The location of some of the first lots to be sold by the East Boston Company in 1833, the square survives from the original 1833 plan of East Boston. The area surrounding the park became a very desirable place to live, with most residential development occurring between 1840 and 1890. Today, the park is lined by beautiful Greek Revival homes, as well as the Italianate style and mansard double houses.

Area residents want to see this park in the Jeffries Point neighborhood preserved and maintained.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### East Boston Greenway

(construction began 1999)

Neighborhood activism for the protection of green space in East Boston dates to the leveling of Wood Island Park in the late 1960s (See “Wood Island Park” in “Priority” section, above). Massport has worked with the East Boston community over the past two decades to significantly develop East Boston’s green space.

This development has included the creation of popular parks such as Piers Park, the Airport Edge Buffers, walk/bike trails, and public art, all of which are maintained and operated by Massport. (For a guide to East Boston’s open spaces, see Boston Natural Areas Network and Friends of the East Boston Greenway map, listed in References.) In addition, community residents and neighborhood groups continue to advocate for completion of the East Boston Greenway to Constitution Beach.

Seen above is the entranceway to the Greenway along the abandoned rail corridor that Conway donated to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) in 1995, based on TPL’s proposal to develop the corridor into a greenway. The City of Boston acquired part of the corridor in 1998, and construction on the Greenway began the following year. (For additional information, see Dumanoski 2001.)



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIA BRASSER

### The Golden Stairs

Golden Stairs Terrace Park  
Jeffries Point  
(date unknown)

The “Golden Stairs,” located near the Jeffries Point piers, were re-built in 2001, and are known in the community as a symbol of opportunity for immigrants in the New World. Some residents, including local youth, would like to see a permanent marker of some kind to identify the Golden Stairs.

The image above shows the Golden Stairs with a timeline created by students at the Umana Middle School, 2010.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

### East Boston Immigration Station

285 Marginal Street  
(Built in 1919; opened in 1920; demolished in 2011)

The East Boston Immigration Station was constructed as a processing and detention facility for immigrants. It operated until 1954. Originally planned as a three-story facility, the utilitarian building was scaled down to two stories. The building, also known as Building 18, is located in a Designated Port Area (“DPA”); Massport currently owns the site, along with the surrounding waterfront area that includes the flanking properties of the Navy Fuel Pier Airport Edge Buffer and the East Boston Shipyard.

At the time of this report’s completion, the East Boston Immigration Station was demolished in 2011 to make way for maritime industrial activities, consistent with the requirements of a DPA. Massport has committed to and is undertaking activities that include salvage, on- and off-site interpretation, documentation of the history of immigration to Boston, and an oral history project.



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF US NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### Samuel Barkin House

18 Neptune Road  
(Constructed 1910; demolished 2009)

This Colonial Revival style triple-decker, designed by architect William Keough, was one of the last surviving triple-deckers from the Neptune Road neighborhood (pictured above in 1973). Other houses were demolished or relocated in the 1960s during Logan Airport's property acquisition program. Massport purchased 18 Neptune Road upon the last owner's death. The building remained vacant until Massport demolished it in 2009 because of public safety considerations and legal restrictions relating to airport land use. The 18 Neptune Road house was representative of its type and a remnant of East Boston neighborhood history that residents felt was important to recognize. (See also "Wood Island Park" entry in "Priority" section, above.)

Agreements between Massport and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as described in a Memorandum of Agreement dated November 2008, include an archival documentation of the Samuel Barkin House, creation and maintenance of the Fourth Airport Edge Buffer, and the on-site interpretation of several historic themes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Houses at corner of Breed and Ford Streets

Some residents expressed an interest in learning more about the houses in this area of the Orient Heights neighborhood.

Pictured above, 26 Breed Street at the intersection of Ford Street.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Gem Theatre, Seville Theatre

52 Meridian Street, 264 Meridian Street  
And Other Historical Theaters

The Gem Theatre occupied the site of the current Shell Gas station until it burned down in the 1950s; some portion of the original Seville Theatre building is thought to survive. Some residents would like to see these and other former neighborhood theaters remembered.

According to Neenah Estrella-Luna's 2005 report on East Boston, the Gem and the Seville were two of five theaters built in East Boston, none of which survived the 1970s intact.

Lifelong East Boston resident Michael Laurano recently shared his memories of the neighborhood's theaters (email to Clark Moulaison, 2/25/2011), including "the well-mannered and more genteel Central [Theatre] on lower Bennington Street" and in Orient Heights, the Orient Palace in a still-existing large building which has recently been remodeled into retail stores. The current site of Spinelli's (282 Bennington Street) formerly housed the Day Square Theater, which later became a grocery store. Laurano also recalls:

*Another movie theater... was in the old wooden Hibernian Hall building on Havre Street (now an empty lot - once Porter Furniture). That was in the days of silent movies with the ever present piano player accompanying the action on the screen... My grandmother waited to deliver her twins (my father and his twin brother) until she saw all of the episodes of a wild [Western] screened there in 1916.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL A. LAURANO

Shown above left: The former location of the Seville Theatre, whose entrance was in the location of the brick veneer to right of the lamppost in foreground. The East Boston Branch Library is visible at far right.

Shown above right: Early-20th-century image of man standing outside an unidentified East Boston theater. (Sign behind him reads in part, "Next Performance.")

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Constitution Beach

799 Bennington Street  
(1952)

Formerly Shea's Beach/Orient Heights Beach, this public beach has been mentioned as an important public space in East Boston. The beach was constructed as a replacement for Wood Island Park, which was disassembled in the late 1960s to make way for airport expansion. (For additional information on the beach's development, see *Seasholes* 2003, p. 380-83; see also "Wood Island Park" in "Priority" section above.)

Above, Constitution Beach with blue pedestrian overpass and Madonna, Queen of the Universe Statue visible in background.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### East Boston Pottery Manufacturing (including a possible ca. 1927 kiln)

Next to 130 Condor Street

Between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries, a pottery manufacturing industry existed on East Boston's waterfront. Further research is needed to determine whether the ca. 1927 kiln existed in a still-standing building on Condor Street, pictured left. (For a summary of the pottery industry in East Boston, see *Seasholes* p. 49. See Sammarco 1997, p. 124 for a historical image of the New England Pottery Company at 146 Condor Street.)



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICALINDAMOOD

### Frank Vesce Building

972-974 Saratoga Street  
(1922)

This brick Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival style commercial block was designed by architect Samuel S. Eisenberg. The building occupies a prominent location in Orient Heights; its rounded corner faces the intersection of Saratoga and Boardman streets. El Kiosco Restaurant currently occupies the first floor of this building; Mangini's Bar was a previous tenant. Residential units occupy the second through fourth stories.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICALINDAMOOD

### George Caledonia Building

1006-1010 Bennington Street  
(1914)

Sometimes referred to by residents as the El Paisa Butchery Building (the butchery currently occupies the 1010 storefront), this Classical Revival commercial building in the Orient Heights commercial center features a distinctive faced sandstone block façade. The building was designed by architect Samuel S. Levy.



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### General Electric East Boston Lamp Works, Cox Confectionary Company Building

156-200 Porter Street, 150 Orleans Street  
(1913, 1917)

Residents have called attention to these historical factories. The General Electric East Boston Lamp Works building, designed by architect Lewis Jerome Johnson, housed the Revelation Bra Company, Inc. and is known in the neighborhood as “the bra factory.” This building was converted into 216 loft condominiums in 2005.

Cox Confectionary Company (“the gumball factory”), designed by Haven and Crosby, was converted into condominiums in the 1980s. Both of these buildings appear to be in good condition.

Neenah Estrella-Luna’s 2005 report on East Boston history includes related information, including a brief history of the Cox Confectionary Company, which specialized in bubble gum production beginning in the 1930s.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Casa de la Cultura building

202 Maverick Street  
(1978)

This building, built on the site of former DiPietro Funeral Home, formerly housed ZUMIX (now in the Engine Company 40 Firehouse; See “Success Stories,” below), and previous to that served as bar/restaurant, church and community center, according to the property’s realtor; it currently houses a Latino cultural center, Casa de la Cultura.

The garage next door to this building was previously a carriage house, during the former building’s life as a funeral home, according to the realtor.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Samuel Adams Elementary School

165 Webster Street  
(1910)

The family home of John F. Kennedy's grandparents, a two-story wood building dating from the 1840s, was demolished in order to build this public school. The 1910 Colonial Revival style building was designed by Huntress and Alter Ashton; Coveney and Bisbee Brigham. According to residents, a sign at the site indicates its historical association with the Kennedy family.

Neighborhood residents have expressed an interest in other local sites associated with the Kennedy family, including 151 Meridian Street, an existing building where members of the Kennedy family apparently lived for some time.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### East Boston Relief Station

14 Porter Street  
(1907)

Not immediately threatened, this Classical Revival and Craftsman style building (designed by Edward Percy Dana; Whitcomb and Kavanaugh Company) in Central Square is considered significant. Also known as the Family Welfare Society Building, the relief station was built by the City of Boston with funding from the George Robert White Fund as an early neighborhood health clinic, with medical staff that spoke the native tongues of immigrant groups to the city. Currently the building houses the East Boston Counseling Center. According to one neighborhood resident, the building's future may be contingent upon continued State Mental Health funding.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### East Boston High School

86 White Street  
(1926)

This English Revival style school building was designed by John Matthew Gray Company and A. Piotti Company, and is part of the Eagle Hill National Register District. The school is located on the former site of the East Boston reservoir.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NANCY S. SEASHOLES

### Boston Electric Light Company/ Condor Iron Foundry Co./ Gibby Foundry Co.

80 Condor Street  
(ca. 1886-1902)

The auto body shop currently at this site likely includes elements of the original ca. 1886 Boston Electric Light Co. building (enlarged or replaced by 1900). Condor Iron Foundry took over the building in 1902, after Boston Edison acquired Boston Electric Light. Gibby Foundry Company (of George H. Gibby) succeeded Condor Iron in 1904. (For more information about this property, see Seasholes 2009, p. 46-47.)

The currently standing building, built or enlarged ca. 1900, is pictured in the above photograph.



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### George White Fund East Boston Health Unit

79 Paris Street  
(1925)

Originally a well baby clinic, this Colonial Revival style hospital was designed by architects Abbott; Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch; and A. Piotti Company. The building currently houses several clinics and programs of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, including a dental clinic, an HIV services program, and community safety programs.

Recently some residents have expressed uncertainty about the building's long-term status, in light of the construction of the new Health Center in Maverick Square. Some residents have expressed a desire to see White's will reviewed.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Soldani Building

326-328 Sumner Street  
(1929)

Pioneering female apothecaries worked in this building, perhaps including Elizabeth Greenleaf, according to residents. Former businesses in this building included Soldani's Pharmacy; it currently houses a grocery store. This Classical Revival style building was designed by architects Victor Croso and John A. Quirk, and is currently for sale.



## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH KELLY

### “The Bridges”

An important element of East Boston’s transportation history, “the bridges” was raised as a topic of interest during the neighborhood workshop series. Bridges in the neighborhood include the Wordsworth Street Footbridge over the MBTA Blue Line (1900), the Bennington Street Bridge over Conrail (1906, architect: Boston & Albany Railroad), the Porter Street Bridge over Conrail (1908, architect: Boston & Albany Railroad), the Sumner Street Bridge over Conrail (1908), the Saratoga Street Bridge over the MBTA Blue Line (1913), the McArdle Bridge (commonly known as the Meridian Street Bridge over Chelsea River) (1954, architect: Charles A Maquire & Assoc.), and the Saratoga Street Bridge over Belle Island Inlet (1956). Previously, the Meridian Street Bridge (1856) connected Meridian Street East Boston to Pearl Street Chelsea.

An original Chelsea Street Bridge, connecting Chelsea Street East Boston to Chelsea, was constructed in 1834; subsequent bridges were built in the same location. The current Chelsea Street Bridge, constructed in 1900 and rehabilitated in 1936, has been deemed structurally deficient and is scheduled to be demolished in 2011, with a new bridge scheduled to open in January 2012. The above image shows the bridge as it appeared in early February 2011, with some elements of the early-20th-century structure remaining, and some new construction visible. The Alliance would advocate for salvaging elements of the earlier bridge for re-use, e.g. in parks, as has been done with other demolished bridges.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Keyes Square, Eagle Hill

Intersection of White, Meridian, and Marion streets

Keyes was the first East Boston soldier in WWI; one resident recalls the story of how following his death, his body was marched down the streets of East Boston.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



### Cobblestones on Ida Street; Cobblestone Tracks embedded at end of Wally Street (into gate at Suffolk Downs Station)

(ca. mid-19th century)

This is a feature that many people feel evokes the neighborhood's early history, and should be preserved and repaired as necessary.

Pictured above, cobblestones on Ida Street in Jeffries Point. The rectangular stones pictured here, historically known as setts, replaced rounded cobblestones in the 19th century.



### Gas Lanterns (Pearl Street Place, Bremen Street and other locations)

These features add to the community character and many believe they should be maintained and preserved. Some residents have expressed interest in attaining additional historic street lighting.

Shown above, streetlamps at Ford and Boardman streets in Orient Heights.

## 2.3b Unique East Boston Places and Features: Additional Properties of Note



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Sidewalks and Streets; Other Aesthetic Issues

Oil stains on sidewalks and streets were raised as a concern; litter on sidewalks was also raised as an issue (for both commercial & residential areas).

Aluminum siding, chain link fences, and satellite dishes (multiple, on sides of buildings, as pictured above) are other issues about which some residents have expressed concern.

No Image Available

### Retaining Wall(s), Orient Heights Narrow Gauge Station

(1875)

Some residents of Orient Heights wonder if the wall, a remnant of the Boston, Revere Beach & Lynn Railroad (the locomotive railroad that predated to the Blue Line), still remains. (For a related discussion, see "Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn Railroad Tunnel" in "Priority" section, above.)

### West End Street Railway Car House

283 Border Street

(constructed 1894, demolished mid-1980s)

Some residents have commented that they would like to see attention paid to this former brick power station. Information about the station's history can be found in Seasholes 2009, p. 52.

## 3.0 Next Steps for Neighborhood Historic Preservation:

### Additional Notes on Community Views, Interests, and Actions

#### **Eagle Hill: Local History Series**

The Eagle Hill Civic Association plans to host a series of seminars titled “East Boston Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow” during 2011; the first in this series took place on March 2nd and featured historian Anthony Sammarco as speaker. This series could potentially support historic preservation education and advocacy efforts in Eagle Hill and East Boston as a whole.

#### **Orient Heights: Interest in Neighborhood Walking Tour**

Following discussion of an earlier version of this report at the Orient Heights Neighborhood Association’s November 2010 meeting, some members of the association expressed interest in organizing a historical walking tour of the Orient Heights neighborhood.

#### **Youth Leadership**

A number of community residents have expressed the view that East Boston’s youth are the residents most likely to be willing and able to become the leaders of historic preservation in the neighborhood. One example of how this vision has already begun to take shape resides in the East Boston Historical Society, a project at the Umana Middle School (with leadership from The Boston Museum) in 2009-2010. This project remains influential, in that it sparked an ongoing interest in local history and historic preservation concerns at the school.

Additionally, the Chelsea Creek Action Group, an East Boston environmental initiative, includes a youth program. This program could potentially feed or complement neighborhood-based historic preservation initiatives. ZUMIX’s youth radio program could also play a role (See “Oral History Project,” below).

#### **Oral History Project**

Madeleine Steczynski, executive director of the youth organization ZUMIX, which is housed in Jeffries Point’s historic Engine Company 40 Firehouse building (see below), recently convened a group of interested East Boston residents and former residents to kick off an oral history project that will document various aspects of the neighborhood’s history. ZUMIX’s youth radio program may broadcast some parts of the planned oral history interviews. The oral history interviews promise to complement and supplement information contained in this report.



## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston

The properties that appear in the following pages represent highlights of historic preservation “successes” in the neighborhood, including successful re-uses of historical buildings that had fallen into disuse. This is by no means a comprehensive listing of East Boston’s historic preservation successes, but rather a compilation of success stories that residents and other community members brought to light in the course of preparing this report.

## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOT SHOTS PHOTOGRAPHY

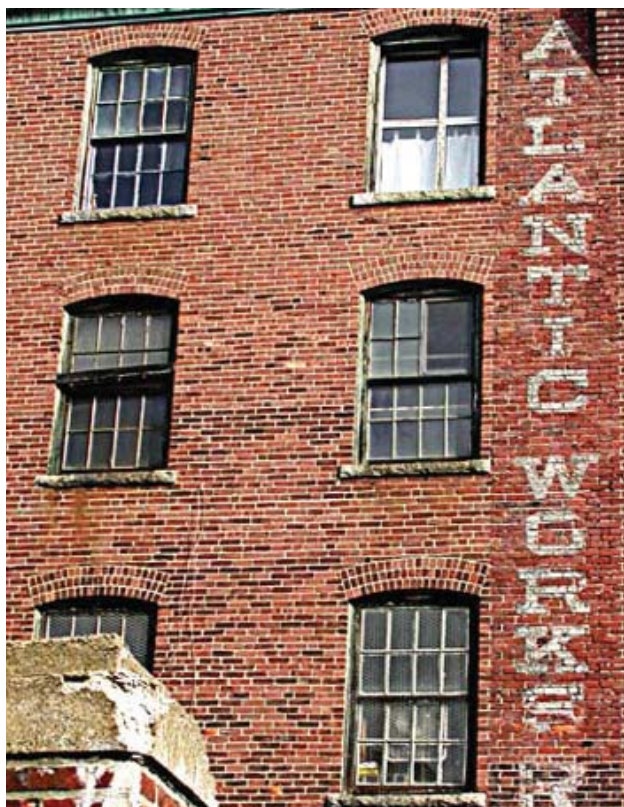
### Engine Company 40 Firehouse

260 Sumner Street

(1923)

Built in 1923, Engine Company 40 Firehouse served the Jeffries Point neighborhood of East Boston and also housed the Boston Fire Boat. Long vacant, the building was purchased in 2005 by ZUMIX, Inc. Extensive renovations completed in 2009 created a 9,000-square-foot facility for youth programming.

## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



### Atlantic Works and Wigglesworth Machinery Company Buildings

60-80 Border Street

(Constructed between ca. 1893 and 1927)

Atlantic Works, which produced steamship boilers and engines, was established in 1853 and was originally located at Chelsea and Marion streets. In 1893 Atlantic Works constructed the three-story building that still stands. The building features a large arched doorway that faces the doorway and a smaller arched doorway on New Street. (See Seasholes 2009, p. 24 for more information.)

Part of the Atlantic Works shipbuilding company, 80 Border Street now operates as an artists' cooperative, housing artist studios, exhibit space, and a local history library.

Since 1955, Wigglesworth Machinery has occupied the former Atlantic Works machine-shop building at 60 Border Street, which was constructed in 1930 to replace an earlier shop destroyed by fire. Some residents would like to see more public attention paid to these highly visible, historical buildings. (For additional information on these buildings, see "Samuel Hall Shipyard" above.)



## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



### Joseph H. Barnes School

127 Marion Street

(Constructed in 1901; addition built in 1933)

Beginning in 2006, the building was redeveloped by East Boston Community Development Corp, and opened as housing for the elderly in June 2007. The Barnes School building abuts the Eagle Hill Historic Conservation District, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The building was nominated for Boston Landmark status and accepted for further study in 2001.



## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



### Fran Rowan Meridian House

408 Meridian Street  
(1878)

Lyman Underwood designed this Victorian Gothic style house for Charles R. McLean, a local mill wright and grain elevator designer. McLean later became active in politics. This house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Eagle Hill Historic District.

Known until recently as “Meridian House,” this building currently houses a substance abuse recovery program operated by North Suffolk Mental Health Association, and is owned by the East Boston Community Development Corporation. In 2010, Fran Rowan, longtime advocate for the building's renovation and re-use as a drug rehabilitation facility, resigned from the board of directors. The board subsequently voted to name the house “Fran Rowan Meridian House” to honor her pivotal role in the facility's establishment and longevity.

## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Most Holy Redeemer Church and associated buildings

72 Maverick Street  
(1857)

Designed by church architect Patrick C. Keeley, this was the first Roman Catholic church in East Boston, serving an Irish immigrant community, and originally featured a 200-foot-high spire. (For a historical image of the church façade with spire, see Sammarco, East Boston, p. 62.)

The church today is a major hub for the local Latino community. Its pastor has expressed a commitment to historic preservation. Restorative masonry work on the church façade and bell tower took place in 2010; according to the pastor, re-pointing on the rear wall will follow soon. The church's front door and canopy awnings have been replaced within the past one to two years, and the gilded cross on the bell tower has been repaired in the past several years.

The park across the street from the church (shown in foreground of photograph above) is recognized as a significant community resource. The fountain pictured at the park's center is the "Most Holy Redeemer Peace Fountain," as named on a plaque.

## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



### 303 Café

303 Sumner Street  
(ca. 1920)

Formerly a general store (Aronson's Dry Goods), this building also served as the private residence for an MIT mathematician and physicist. Previously, 303 Sumner Street housed several businesses, including a wallpaper company and a periodical sales company, as well as serving as a residence.

Two restaurateurs purchased the building in 2002, and after major rehabilitation and renovation, turned the structure into a successful café. Original elements include the tin ceiling, hardwood floor, and brick interior walls.



## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



### Scup's in the Harbour Restaurant; surrounding ship repair business and sculpture garden

256 Marginal Street Building 16  
(ca. 1935)

Located in the Boston Harbor Shipyard and Marina (formerly Bethlehem Atlantic Works Shipyard) in Jeffries Point, this restaurant has been a major community gathering place. The restaurant's location calls attention to the histories of shipbuilding, shipping and immigration in East Boston. The restaurant closed in 2011 and its future is uncertain.



## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



### East Boston YMCA

215 Bremen Street  
(1910)

This former railroad engine repair house (historic name: Boston and Albany Railroad Engine House) was designed by architect Fred M Davison. The repair house has been preserved and restored, and now serves as home to the East Boston YMCA, including a childcare center. Two historical photographs of the engine repair house are displayed in the building's lobby.

The YMCA is currently having problems with flooding and bricks need to be repointed.

## 4.0 Historic Preservation Success Stories in East Boston



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICA LINDAMOOD

### Sturtevant House

406 Meridian Street  
(1847)

406 Meridian Street was built for local businessman Noah Sturtevant around 1847, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1992, and also has Boston Landmark status, as well as being listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource to the Eagle Hill Historic District. In 1917 it became the Trinity Neighborhood House and Day Nursery, an early settlement house program established by Trinity Church rector Phillips Brooks in 1881. Since 1993, 406 Meridian has housed seniors, singles, and persons with disabilities.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEENAH ESTRELLA-LUNA

### St. John's Episcopal Church

80 Lexington Street  
(1903)

This church building at the corner of Lexington and Marion streets currently houses the APAC Head Start program. The façade of this Elizabethan Gothic style Episcopalian church has been altered, including removal of the two original spires. (For historical photographs of the church, see Sammarco's *East Boston*, p. 66.)



## 5.0 References

---

### **“Barnes School to Become Affordable Housing for Seniors”**

*Boston Business Journal* 3/35/2005

<http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/stories/2005/03/21/daily62.html>

---

### **“Boston Edison Company.”**

<http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Boston-Edison-Company-Company-History.html>

---

### **Boston Harborwalk**

*“Places to Go... East Boston.”*

[www.bostonharborwalk.com/placestogo/location.php?nid=4](http://www.bostonharborwalk.com/placestogo/location.php?nid=4)

---

### **Boston History Collaborative.**

*“Boston Family History: East Boston.”*

[www.bostonhistorycollaborative.org/BostonFamilyHistory/neighborhoods/neigh\\_ebos.html](http://www.bostonhistorycollaborative.org/BostonFamilyHistory/neighborhoods/neigh_ebos.html)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission**

*Eagle Hill Homeowner Handbook*

1997

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission**

*“East Boston” (Exploring Boston’s Neighborhoods series).*

1995. [Pamphlet]

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission**

*“Five Street Clocks”*

*Study Report*

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 402**

(1006-1010 Bennington Street; 2, 4, 6 Breed Street;

974-978 Saratoga Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 408**

(East Boston Savings Bank, 10-16 Meridian Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 415**

(Woodbury Building, 191-201 Sumner Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 508**

(Joseph H. Barnes Middle School, 127 Marion Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 510**

(East Boston Branch Library, 276-282 Meridian Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 511**

(Trinity Neighborhood House, 406 Meridian Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 1010**

(Maverick Square: 1-75 Maverick Square, 191-201 Sumner Street)

---

### **Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Form No. EB 1012**

(358-426 Meridian Street)

---



## 5.0 References

---

Boston Natural Areas Network and Friends of the East Boston Greenway

*"East Boston Open Space Map and Guide."*

---

Boston Preservation Alliance

*"Awards"*

[www.bostonpreservation.org](http://www.bostonpreservation.org)

---

Boston Public Library

*"East Boston Branch Library"*

[www.bpl.org/branches/eastboston.htm](http://www.bpl.org/branches/eastboston.htm)

---

Bridgehunter.com: Historic Bridges of the United States

*"Chelsea Street Bridge"*

2010

<http://bridgehunter.com/ma/suffolk/B16020384MUNNBI/>

---

Brown, William J

*"American Colossus: The Grain Elevator"*

*Boston, Massachusetts (April 4, 2009)*

[http://american-colossus.blogspot.com/2009\\_03\\_29\\_archive.html](http://american-colossus.blogspot.com/2009_03_29_archive.html)

---

Carrera, Fabio

*"A Visual Assessment of the Future of East Boston"*

*(February 14, 1999)*

[http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Depts/IGSD/Projects/Venice/Center/Large\\_Files/MIT\\_Papers/A%20visual%20assessment%20of%20the%20future%20of%20East%20Boston.pdf](http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Depts/IGSD/Projects/Venice/Center/Large_Files/MIT_Papers/A%20visual%20assessment%20of%20the%20future%20of%20East%20Boston.pdf)

---

Chelsea Historical Society

*"Bridges in Chelsea"*

<http://www.olgp.net/chs/bridge/bridges.htm>

---

Conte, Frank (Ed.)

*"History of East Boston"*

[www.eastboston.com/histoc.htm](http://www.eastboston.com/histoc.htm)

---

Dumanoski, Dianne.

*"Parks, Lost and Found"*

*Land & People (Spring 2001)*

[http://www.tpl.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=3522&folder\\_id=1205](http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=3522&folder_id=1205)

---

Dunn, Bob

*"East Boston's big secret: Its own long Greenway"*

*Rye Reflections June 2010*

<http://www.ryereflections.org/servlet/pluto?state=303034706167653030375765625061676530303269643030353132393538>

---

East Boston Historical Society (Blog)

<http://umanaebhs.blogspot.com/>

---

East Boston Main Streets

*"An Early History of East Boston, 1629-1880"*

[www.ebmainstreets.com/history/eastboston.htm](http://www.ebmainstreets.com/history/eastboston.htm)

## 5.0 References

---

Ernst, C.W

*"The Postal Service in Boston, from 1639 to 1893"*

*Professional and Industrial History of Suffolk County, Massachusetts, Volume 2, ed. William Thomas Davis. Boston: The Boston History Company, 1894.*

---

Estrella-Luna, Neenah

*East Boston: Boston's Ellis Island*

*(PowerPoint Presentation, Northeastern University, 2005)*

---

Fort Point Associates, Inc.

*"Boston East (East Boston, Massachusetts). Notification Form; Environmental Notification (October 19, 2007)*

---

Harper, Douglas

*"Slavery in Massachusetts"*

[www.slavenorth.com/massachusetts.htm](http://www.slavenorth.com/massachusetts.htm)

---

Harris, Patricia and David Lyon

*"Arts Neighborhood and Mix of Menus Stir a Happily Gritty Neighborhood"*

*Boston.com (April 4, 2010)*

[www.boston.com/travel/boston/articles](http://www.boston.com/travel/boston/articles)

---

Hayden, Dolores

*The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*

*Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995*

---

Jackson, John Brinckerhoff

*Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*

*New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984*

---

Lukmann, Andres

*"Traces of the Past in Maverick Square: Illustrating Economic, Social and Political Trends Using Artifacts, Layers, and Traces"*

*[Massachusetts Institute of Technology Student Paper]*

<http://web.mit.edu/lukymann/www/city/trends.pdf>

---

Lynds, John

*"Historical Society Takes Shape in Eastie"*

*(January 7, 2010)*

[www.eastietimes.com/2010/01/07/historical-society-takes-shape-in-eastie/](http://www.eastietimes.com/2010/01/07/historical-society-takes-shape-in-eastie/)

---

MACRIS "Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System."

<http://mhc-macris.net/>

---

Marchi, Chris

*"Wood Island Oral History Project to Begin"*

*In email dated December 7, 2010.*

---

## 5.0 References

---

### Mass Housing Update

*July 2007 (Vol. 3, Issue 7)*

<https://www.masshousing.com>

---

### Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)

*"East Boston's Piers Park Receives High Acclaim; Beautiful Park is Awarded for Accessible Design"*

*(12/3/2003)*

[www.massport.com/news-room/News/EastBoston'sPiersParkReceivesHighAcclaim;BeautifulParkisAwardedForAccessibleDesign.aspx](http://www.massport.com/news-room/News/EastBoston'sPiersParkReceivesHighAcclaim;BeautifulParkisAwardedForAccessibleDesign.aspx)

---

### *Memories of the East Boston Community News:*

*History and Personal Recollections 40 Years After First Publication*

*Ipswich, MA: Bob Nagashian, 2010*

---

### Moloney, Deirdre M

*"A Transatlantic Reform: Boston's Port Protection Program and Irish Women Immigrants"*

*Journal of American Ethnic History Vol. 19 No. 1*

*(Fall 1999), pp. 50-66*

---

### *My Legacy Is Simply This: Stories from Boston's Most Enduring Neighborhoods*

*(Vol. II: Charlestown, Chinatown, East Boston, Mattapan)*

*City of Boston/Grub Street, Inc., 2008.*

---

### Mystic River Jewish Communities Project

*"About East Boston"*

<http://mysticriverjews.jcam.org/Pages/EastBoston/index.htm>

---

### Penney, Elizabeth M.

*"Boston Immigration"*

*(1994)*

[Included with Landmark Petition Form to designate East Boston Immigration Station a Boston Landmark]

---

### Petition to Designate the East Boston Immigration Station as a Boston Landmark

*(2000)*

[Boston Preservation Alliance files]

---

### Piontek, Christine

*"The View from East Boston"*

*AllianceLetter (Boston Preservation Alliance) 26:1*

*(Summer 2010)*

---

### Sammarco, Anthony Mitchell

*East Boston*

*Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 1997.*

---

### Sarna, Jonathan D., Ellen Smith and Scott-Martin Kosofsky, Eds

*The Jews of Boston*

*New Haven: Yale University Press, In association with*

*The Combined Jewish Philanthropies of*

*Greater Boston, 2005.*

---

## 5.0 References

---

Seasholes, Nancy S.

*Gaining Ground: A History of Landmaking in Boston*  
Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003

---

Seasholes, Nancy S. and The Cecil Group, Inc

*"Sites for Historical Interpretation on East Boston's Waterfronts"*  
*For City of Boston and the Boston Redevelopment*  
*Authority (April 2009)*

---

Temple Ohabei Shalom

<http://ohabei.org/ohabei/building.php>

---

[www.City-data.com](http://www.City-data.com).

---

ZUMIX

*"History"*

[www.zumix.org/about.html](http://www.zumix.org/about.html)